



**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE**  
for CRVS Systems

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# SNAPSHOT

OF CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS SYSTEMS OF

# UGANDA



**ECA**

## Program Information

### About the Centre of Excellence for CRVS Systems

Housed at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Centre of Excellence for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems is a global knowledge and resource hub that actively supports national efforts to develop, strengthen, and scale CRVS systems. It collaborates with organizations and experts to broker access to information and expertise, including global standards, tools, research evidence, and relevant good practice.

The Centre of Excellence was established with funding from Global Affairs Canada and IDRC and contributes directly to the work of the Global Financing Facility, a key financing platform of the UN Secretary General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's, and adolescents' health.

### About the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, the IDRC invests in knowledge, innovation and solutions to improve the lives of people in the developing world. IDRC works with many stakeholders including civil society organizations, think tanks, regional organizations and government departments in the developing world to promote growth, reduce poverty, and drive large-scale positive change.

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## Introduction

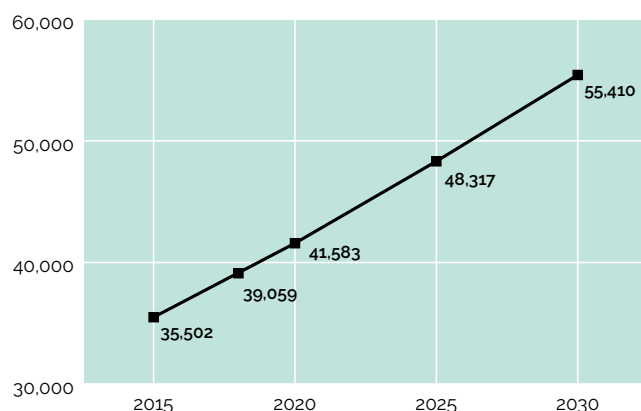
The purpose of this report is to provide a brief introduction to the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems in Uganda.

The information was collected through a questionnaire completed by the National Identification and Registration Authority in January 2019 and supplemented by a desk review of available documents. The report presents country background, selected indicators relevant for CRVS improvement processes, stakeholders activities and resources available and needed to strengthen CRVS systems, coordination, among others.

## Brief country profile

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa. It is bordered by South Sudan on the north, the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the east, Kenya on the west, and Rwanda and Tanzania in the south. Uganda is usually referred to as the Pearl of Africa. The White Nile originates in Uganda. The land area of Uganda is 241,550.7 square kilometres.<sup>1</sup> The total population in 2019 was estimated at 40.3 million with an annual rate of natural increase of 3.1.<sup>2</sup> The population for selected years between 2015 to 2030 is given below in Figure 1.<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 1: Uganda's population projection, 2015-2030 (thousands)**



## Uganda



*Disclaimer: The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.*

- Capital city: Kampala
- Official working language: English
- Ministries responsible for civil registration:
  - (i) Ministry of Internal Affairs; and (ii) Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.
- Civil registration agencies:
  - National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA): Births and deaths registrations. NIRA is under the Ministry of Internal Affairs; and
  - Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB): Marriages and divorces registrations. URSB is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.
- National statistical office: Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS)

## CRVS dimensions

### Births

Completeness of birth registration <sup>4</sup>	Not available
Children under 5 years of age whose births were reported as registered	32.2 % (2016) <sup>5</sup>
Births attended by skilled health personnel	74.2 % (2016) <sup>5</sup>
Women aged 15-49 who received antenatal care from a skilled provider	97.3 % (2016) <sup>5</sup>
DPT1 immunization coverage among 1-year-olds <sup>6</sup>	94.9 % (2016) <sup>5</sup>
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	38.7 (2018) <sup>2</sup>
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	5.8 (2016) <sup>5</sup>
Adolescent fertility rate (per 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years)	107 (2017) <sup>7</sup>
Population under age 15	47.7 % (2017) <sup>8</sup>

### Deaths

Completeness of death registration	24.2 % (2016) <sup>5</sup>
Crude death rate (per 1,000 population)	7.5 (2018) <sup>2</sup>
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	35 (2017) <sup>9</sup>
Under five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	49 (2017) <sup>9</sup>
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	343 (2015) <sup>10</sup>

### Marriages and divorces

Marriage registration rate	Not available
Women aged 20-24 first married or in union before age 15	7.3% (2016) <sup>5</sup>
Women aged 20-24 first married or in union before age 18	34% (2016) <sup>5</sup>
Divorce registration rate	Not available

### Vital statistics including causes of death data

Compilation and dissemination of civil registration-based statistics	Not available
Medically certified causes of death data	Not available

## Civil registration system

### Legislative framework

The civil registration system in Uganda is governed by a number of legal instruments.

- (i) Registration of births and deaths is governed by the Registration of Persons Act 2015.<sup>11</sup> The Act provides for compulsory registration of births, deaths and national identification. The 2015 Act repealed the existing Births and Deaths Registration Act and transferred the registration of births and deaths function from the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) to the NIRA.
- (ii) Marriage registration is mandated by the Marriage Act 1904; and Customary Marriage Registration Act (1973) Cap 248.<sup>12</sup>
- (iii) The Children's Law of 2008 covers Adoption Registration.<sup>13</sup>

The Act on births and deaths is universal in its coverage as it covers all population groups in the country, including non-nationals and refugees. The definitions of births and deaths are also aligned with international recommendations.<sup>14</sup>

### Management, organization and operations

The Registration of Persons Act 2015 mandates NIRA to register births, deaths and adoptions as they occur and to register all persons in the country, and to issue National Identification Numbers for citizens and lien Identification Numbers for alien residents. The information gathered is used to establish and maintain a National Identification Register. URSB is responsible for licensing churches to celebrate marriages and solemnizing civil marriages.

### *National CRVS systems coordination mechanisms*

The civil registration system improvement work is coordinated by a national task force which consists of the following members: Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB); Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Local Government; Ministry of Education and sports; Ministry of Gender and Labor and Social Development; National Planning Authority; Electoral Commission; Population Secretariat; and Development partners: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Health Organization (WHO); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); UNHCR; World Vision; and Plan International

### *Administrative level registration centres*

Uganda has 116 Districts; 200 Counties; 1,440 sub-Counties; 7,571 Parishes; and 57,858 Villages.<sup>15</sup> The local civil registration offices for births and deaths are at the district levels. Currently, there are a total of 152 births and deaths registration offices throughout the country. Nineteen (14 per cent) of the total registration offices are located in urban areas and 133 (86 per cent) are in rural areas. For marriages, there are 2,095 service points in the country. Out of these, 133 service points are in urban areas where Marriage Registrars solemnize marriages; and 1,943 for customary marriages in rural areas.

### *Accessibility of civil registration services*

Most households reside more than 10 kilometres from the nearest local registration office. It was estimated that it could take up to 4 hours for most service seekers to reach the nearest office. In some of the areas, the service points are so far that it could take up to 4 hours by car to reach it.<sup>16</sup>

## Registration of vital events

Table 2: Direct costs associated with registration and certification of vital events

Vital event	Fee for registration		Cost of registration
	Yes	No	
Birth		X	
Marriage	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil marriage: USD 67 (250,000 UGX) for Nationals</li> <li>• Customary marriage: USD 5 (20,000 UGX) for Nationals</li> <li>• Church, Hindu and Moslem: USD 9 (35,000 UGX)</li> </ul>
Divorce	X		Not available
Death		X	
	Fee for certificates		Cost of a certificate
	Yes	No	
Birth	X		USD 13 (5,000 UGX)
Marriage	X		USD 7 (25,000 UGX) for Nationals
Divorce	X		Not available
Death	X		USD 13 (5,000 UGX)

Note: 1 Ugandan shilling (UGX) is about 0.00027 US dollars<sup>27</sup>

## Backlog of unregistered births

Information not available from NIRA.

## Interface with other sectors and operations

The Registration of Persons Act, 2015 provides the basis to harmonise and incorporate different systems into a national register of persons. A unique National Identification Number is issued by NIRA when a birth is registered linking the civil registration system. The civil registration and national identification systems are under NIRA but they are not currently electronically linked.

The health sector plays an important role in the notification of occurrence of births and deaths in health facilities, including providing causes of deaths. However, the link between NIRA, which registers births and deaths, and URSB, which registers marriages, is not clear.

## Vital statistics system

### Vital statistics

The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) Act 1998 states the Bureau is responsible for matters relating to which statistical information may be collected, compiled, analyzed, abstracted and published on different areas, including vital occurrences and mortality. It also mentions that UBOS is mandated to collect routine administrative statistics, which includes civil registration.<sup>18</sup>

The Registration of Persons Act of 2015 states that the register shall be used for statistical purposes, among others. However, it does not mention the collection, compilation and dissemination of vital statistics from the civil registration system. It should be noted that UBOS is member of the board of NIRA.

UBOS collects, compiles and disseminates vital statistics from decennial population censuses and household surveys such as the Demographic and Health Survey every 5-years or so. The Bureau does not compile and disseminate vital statistics from civil registration.





## Causes of death

Causes of death information is only collected and recorded for deaths occurring in health facilities. Medical officers are required by regulation to complete a NIRA cause of death form for deaths occurring in health facilities. According to NIRA, causes of death are coded according to the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) 10 format.

UBOS includes few causes of under-five health facility-based mortality data in its Annual Statistical Abstract.<sup>1</sup> The information is obtained from Ministry of Health.

At this stage, there is no initiative by NIRA or UBOS to implement a verbal autopsy procedure to determine probable causes of death for deaths occurring outside health facilities.



FORM 13

*Regulation 21(1)*

THE REGISTRATION OF PERSONS (BIRTHS AND DEATHS)

REGULATIONS, 2015

### CERTIFICATE OF CAUSE OF DEATH

I,.....(name of medical officer) of.....(name and address of hospital) have been attending to .....(name of deceased) for the last.....(state period) and who died on.....in the month of .....2..... and certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the cause of his or her death was.....  
.....  
.....

Date (dd/mm/yy) .....

.....  
Signature of medical officer.

\*The fields in the Form may be modified to deal with causes of deaths occurring outside a medical facility.

## Digitization

### Computerization

The registration of births and deaths in Uganda is paper-based at all of the lowest registration centres. At regional level, the information is entered into the national database. All local registration offices but only a few health facilities in the country have computers.

Electronic media, such as CDs, flash discs/sticks, are used to transfer civil registration information from local registration centres to the next higher level registration offices.

### Mobile technology application

Mobile technology is being used for notification of occurrence of births. Mobile Vital Record System, developed with the help of UNICEF and Uganda Telecom in 2013, has enabled communities to notify, and subsequently register births. The system enables a mother living in a remote village to report a birth to a local government notifier, who then enters the information via mobile phone to the central database.<sup>19</sup>

The screenshot shows the Uganda Mobile VRS website. The header includes the NIRA logo (National Identification and Registration Authority), the title "UGANDA MOBILE VRS", and a map of Uganda. The navigation bar contains links: HOME, BIRTH STATS, DEATH STATS, SUMMARY STATS, MY MOBILE VRS, and HELP. The main content area is titled "ABOUT MOBILE VITAL RECORDS SYSTEM" and features a photograph of three children. The text describes the high fertility rate in Uganda and the importance of birth registration. A quote from Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is included. The footer mentions the system was developed under a public-private partnership between Uganda Telecom (UTL) and the Government of Uganda, with support from UNICEF.

**GENERAL PUBLIC**

- Search Records
- Summary Stats
- NIRA Website

**OFFICIAL USE**

- Login

### Sample registration forms

- Birth and death registration: Available on the NIRA website: <https://www.nira.go.ug/index.php/forms/forms-for-births-and-deaths-registration/>
- Notice of marriage: <https://ursb.go.ug/civil-registration-forms/>
- Marriage certificate: <https://data.unicef.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/marriageCertificateUganda.pdf>

## Improvement initiatives and external support

### Improvement plan and budget

#### Strategic plan

A strategic plan for the improvement of CRVS systems has not been developed.

#### Budgetary allocations and requirements

Information on budgetary requirement and allocations was not available

#### Activities identified as high priorities

Information was not available as a strategic plan for the improvement of CRVS systems is yet to be developed.

### Support from development partners

International organizations	Kind of support
World Bank and Global Financing Facility	<p>Support to strengthen the civil registration system through strengthening the civil registration Authority to carry out its mandate and scale up birth and death registration across the country. In particular,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen NIRA to provide birth and death registration services</li> <li>• Development and dissemination of CRVS strategy and CRVS communication strategy</li> <li>• Development of registration documents</li> <li>• Establishment of monitoring and evaluation system for CRVS</li> <li>• Support NIRA to scale-up birth and death registration services at health facility and community level</li> </ul>
UNICEF	Support to civil registration Authority to scale up birth registration in selected parts of the country.

Source: Questionnaire completed by NIRA

## Proposals to improve coordination

### *National CRVS stakeholders*

Coordination and collaboration among key stakeholders is a necessary condition for the improvement of CRVS systems in any country. NIRA has provided the following recommendations to achieve better coordination among key stakeholders at the national level.

- a. Regular scheduled meetings that ensure the progress of civil registration in the country is monitored with the necessary follow up actions taken by the various stakeholders;
- b. Develop a Joint Work Plan to give guidance and direction to the Coordination Team; and
- c. Stakeholder mapping and defining roles.

### *National institutes and development partners*

NIRA has made the following proposals to enhance effective coordination between key national CRVS stakeholders and development partners at the national level.

- a. All development partner funding to be in line with a CRVS strategic plan as well as the National Development Plan;
- b. Annual review of an integrated work plan and budget of CRVS stakeholders and development partners to avoid duplication and ensure optimal resource use;
- c. An efficient and effective National Task Force that represents all development partners and CRVS stakeholders

## Resources

### Websites

- National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA): <https://www.nira.go.ug/>
- Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB): <https://ursb.go.ug/civil-registration-2/>
- Ministry of Health: <https://health.go.ug/>
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics: <https://www.ubos.org/>
- WHO-Uganda: <https://afro.who.int/countries/uganda>
- UNICEF-Uganda: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/crvs/uganda/>

### Additional materials

The materials listed below are results of an Internet search.

- Ssekisaka Farouk Kavuma. 2015. Birth Registration in Uganda: Challenges, Opportunities And Lessons. Powerpoint presentation at the IUSSP Side meeting, 7th African Population Conference. Johannesburg, South Africa, 28 November 2015. <https://iussp.org/sites/default/files/IUSSP%20side-meeting%20CRVS%20Ssekisaka%20Farouk.pdf>.
- Centre of Excellence/ IDRC. 2016. How the Government of Uganda strengthened its CRVS system. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwaNtS8imJk>
- The Justice, Law & Order Sector. Mobile birth registration in Uganda. <https://www.jlos.go.ug/index.php/component/k2/item/473-mobile-birth-registration-in-uganda>
- UNICEF. 2018. Recording births in Uganda's remote villages. <https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/recording-births-ugandas-remote-villages>

## Conclusion

Uganda has restructured its civil registration system under the Registration of Persons Act 2015. The Act brings together registration of births and deaths and national identification system under NIRA. Under this Act, Uganda has introduced the unique national identification number (NIN) which is shared by the national identification card and recorded on birth registers and certificates.

Uganda has been at the forefront in Africa in implementing mobile technology for the notification of births since 2013, in collaboration with development partners such as UNICEF. This and the role of health facilities have contributed to an improved registration coverage. The link between civil registration and vital statistics systems is weak at this stage. The United Nations emphasizes the statistical recording and reporting of vital events information irrespective of either

the degree of completeness of registration coverage or the extent of data available.<sup>14</sup> The 2015 Act requires that medical officers complete a certificate of cause of death. However, Uganda has yet to strengthen the collection of information and reporting of causes of death. In the Uganda One Health Strategic Plan, 2018-2022,<sup>20</sup> there is no mention of collaboration with NIRA on registration of vital events nor with UBOS on sharing of data – therefore, there is need to coordinate activities and set interface among these key stakeholders.

In 2012, the Second conference of Ministers responsible for Civil Registration recommended that all countries conduct a comprehensive assessment and develop strategic plan to improve their CRVS systems. Uganda has completed a baseline survey on CRVS and has yet to prepare a national CRVS strategic plan.



## Endnotes

- 1 Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). 2018. *2018 Statistical Abstract*. Accessed April 4, 2019. [https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/01\\_2019STATISTICAL\\_ABSTRACT\\_2019.pdf](https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/01_2019STATISTICAL_ABSTRACT_2019.pdf)
- 2 UBOS. 2019. *Population Projections of Uganda, 2015-2030*. Accessed April 4, 2019. <https://www.ubos.org/publications/statistical/20/>
- 3 UBOS. 2019. *Population Projections of Uganda, 2015-2030*. Accessed April 4, 2019. <https://www.ubos.org/publications/statistical/20/>
- 4 Birth or death registration completeness means the actual number of registered births or deaths divided by the estimated number of births or deaths in a particular country or area, in a specified time period usually a year. For further reading refer to ECA, ESCAP and Statistics Norway (2016).
- 5 UBOS and ICF. 2018. *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2016*. Kampala, Uganda and Rockville, Maryland, USA: UBOS and ICF. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR333/FR333.pdf>
- 6 DPT1: Surviving infants who received the first dose of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT) vaccine.
- 7 World Bank. 2018. *Adolescent Fertility Rate*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>
- 8 United Nations. 2017. *World Population Prospects. Volume-II: Demographic Profile*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. [https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017\\_Volume-II-Demographic-Profiles.pdf](https://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2017_Volume-II-Demographic-Profiles.pdf)
- 9 United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation. 2018. UN IGME. *Total Under-5 Mortality Rate, Infant Mortality Rate and Neonatal mortality database 2018*. <http://www.childmortality.org/>
- 10 World Health Organization. 2016. *World health statistics 2016: monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals*. [https://www.who.int/gho/publications/world\\_health\\_statistics/2016/en/](https://www.who.int/gho/publications/world_health_statistics/2016/en/)
- 11 NIRA. 2015. *The Registration of Persons Act 2015*. <https://www.nira.go.ug/index.php/publications/>
- 12 Uganda Legal Information Institute (ULII). *Marriage Act 1904*. <https://ulii.org/ug/legislation/consolidated-act/251>
- 13 International Committee of the Red Cross. *The Children Act*. [https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl-nat.nsf/a24d1cf3344e99934125673e00508142/738fcd999d6976a8c125767e004c5fa6/\\$FILE/THE%20CHILDREN%20ACT.pdf](https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl-nat.nsf/a24d1cf3344e99934125673e00508142/738fcd999d6976a8c125767e004c5fa6/$FILE/THE%20CHILDREN%20ACT.pdf)
- 14 United Nations. 2014. *Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System – Revision 3*. Statistics Division, Statistical Papers, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/standmeth/principles/M19Rev3en.pdf>
- 15 UBOS. 2019. *Uganda profile*. Accessed April 4, 2019. <https://www.ubos.org/uganda-profile/>
- 16 Estimate provided by NIRA of Uganda in 2018.
- 17 Exchange rate accessed on April 26, 2019. Source: <https://www.google.com/>
- 18 Uganda Legal Information Institute. 1998. *The Uganda Bureau of Statistics Act 1998*. <https://ulii.org/ug/legislation/consolidated-act/310>
- 19 UNICEF-Uganda. 2013. *In Uganda, seeking to improve birth registration across Africa*. Retrieved on April 5, 2019. [https://www.unicef.org/protection/uganda\\_70674.html](https://www.unicef.org/protection/uganda_70674.html)
- 20 Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uganda. 2018. *Uganda One Health Strategic Plan, 2018-2022*. Accessed April 6, 2019. <https://health.go.ug/publications/strategic-plans>





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